

To Chairman Arntzen and members of the Local Government Committee:

My name is Nancy Robertson and I live at 76 Hitching Post Road, 4 miles south of Bozeman, Montana.

TRANSPARENCY is the new buzz word in state and national government. Just last week our new President Obama promised "to do our business in the light of day, to restore the trust the people have in us." His administration will be the most transparent in history! Let's bring that thought home to Montana....

I am here today in support of HB 336. As a homeowner served by a rural fire district I have a NEED TO KNOW basic facts about the emergency services available to my family and how they are to be paid for.

Shortly after we moved into our home, we were faced with voting for or against a mill levy that would nearly double our fire taxes. We needed to know facts about our rural fire district in order to cast an informed vote on the levy. I decided to attend a monthly meeting of the fire district board of trustees. I asked them about the current budget and why they needed twice the money they were then receiving. It was there I learned these basic facts and figures were not readily available to taxpayers.

It has taken over two years to acquire important information. I have made many written requests to learn about how the money is spent and what the priorities of the rural fire department are. My neighbors and I have been told *NO MORE INFORMATION!* What are they trying to hide?

When Representative Washburn decided to sponsor HB 336, my neighbors and I were overjoyed. Making information that is "part of the record" of our local fire districts available at the county court house is a very good idea. I do hope you agree.

I urge you to support House Bill 336 so that rural fire districts across the state may become **TRANSPARENT** to the people who are paying the bills.

Thank you.

Nancy Robertson

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Subject: SUPPORT for HB 336

Date: Thu, 29 Jan 2009 11:02 am

Dear Ms Arntzen,

It is my understanding that HB 336 will be heard before your House Committee on Local Government today. I am a resident of Gallatin County and currently serve on the Board of Trustees for the Sourdough Fire District. I urge you to support this Bill and take it forward.

During my residency in the Sourdough Rural Fire District, I have been on both sides of the issue of trying to get information about ours and other local Fire Districts. If you are not a Trustee, it is very difficult at best, to get information from the Fire Districts. **This Bill is about Transparency of local government operations.** This Bill is not about the County Commissioners taking control of Rural Fire Districts. The County Commissions would only be the conduit for getting this information to the public in a "Public Reading Room Sense."

This Bill is not an unfunded mandate. **There are no additional costs to the Fire Districts.** This information is readily available and if not it certainly should be from a **Good Management Practices** standpoint.

Sincerely,

Carl R. Robertson, Sourdough Fire District Trustee
76 Hitching Post Road
Bozeman, Montana 59715

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